

mail-in ballots in a State like Pennsylvania, you are eliminating absentee ballots, as well, by doing that.

So I don't think we want to do that to our fighting men and women. So we can't go back to the days when farmers and small business owners and veterans and busy moms juggling their kids' schedules and seniors who may have trouble voting and need another option to vote—we can't go back to those days when they couldn't vote if they didn't have the time on that one single day.

It is one of the reasons why we had such low voter turnout, even in Presidential elections, for all these years in Pennsylvania and in so many other States. So we know what we have to do. We have to go back to our founding principles. And voting is a foundational pillar of our democracy. And, as elected officials, it is our responsibility to do all we can to expand voter access and remove institutional barriers to voting.

But we have got to be clearer about what is happening. Our democracy, by virtue of these suppression bills, is under siege right now. The attack here on January 6 continues. What was a violent attack on that day is now in the form of legislation to attack our elections, to attack the right to vote, to make it harder to vote.

So attacking democracy at an earlier stage was always met by the right response. Today, that right response—the correct response—is to pass the Freedom to Vote and the John Lewis Act to prevent these kinds of attacks on voting rights.

It would protect election officials by criminalizing intimidation, threats, or coercion of election officials. It would mandate systematic, nonpartisan, risk-limiting audits to combat against the unfounded partisan approaches by Republicans.

It would create national standards for early voting, mail voting, voting restoration, voter identification, and voter registration. It would also include some of the provisions of my bill—the Accessible Voting Act—to create an accessible voting experience for every voter, ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are met.

That is another category of Americans whose votes will be suppressed—people with disabilities—if these Republicans get their way.

This bill we are trying to pass reflects feedback from State and local officials to ensure that people responsible for implementing these reforms can do so effectively.

And, furthermore, it would restore the full strength of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 after the Supreme Court gutted several of the Voting Rights Act provisions in recent years.

These provisions work hand in hand to improve access to the ballot and protect against election subversion. We should restore the Senate at the same time, by allowing plenty of time for debate, as well as a robust amendment process, so the minority party in the

Senate has full opportunity to debate issues like voting rights.

So we have got to do more than just simply move a bill forward tomorrow on voting rights. We should also change the Senate rules appropriately to allow that bill to be passed by a majority after we have a robust debate. Debating voting rights has never been more important. The time to do that is now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The Senator from Utah.

H.R. 5746

Mr. ROMNEY. Madam President, I have enjoyed the discussion which has been going on with regard to this legislation and have a couple of comments. One is, given the interest and the priority of and the importance of elections, it would have been helpful, prior to preparing this legislation for a vote, if those that were the drafters of this legislation actually invited a Republican—any Republican—to sit down and perhaps negotiate and see if we could find some common ground.

But instead, the Democrat leadership dusted off what they had written before on an entirely partisan basis and then are shocked—shocked—that Republicans don't want to support what they drafted.

Now, I note that political overstatement and hyperbole may be relatively common, and they are often excused. But the President and some of my Democratic colleagues have ventured deep into hysteria. Their cataclysmic predictions for failing to support their entirely partisan election reform—worked out entirely by themselves, without any input whatsoever from any single person on my side of the aisle—they are far beyond the pale.

Now, they are entirely right to call out Donald Trump's Big Lie about the last election being stolen. But in the same spirit of honesty, they should not engage in a similar lie that Republicans across the country are making it much harder for minorities to vote and, thus, that the Federal government must urgently displace centuries of constitutional practice that give States primary control over elections.

So dire are the consequences, they claim, that this must be done by shredding the rules of our senior legislative body. They point to Georgia as evidence of political election villainy. The President went there to deliver his crowning argument. But, as has been pointed out by many before me, it is easier for minorities—and everybody else for that matter—to vote in Georgia than it is in the President's home State of Delaware and in Leader SCHUMER's home State of New York.

In Georgia there are more days of early voting, and in Georgia there is no-excuse absentee voting by mail.

They do decry Georgia's prohibition of political activists approaching voters in line with drinks of water, but the

same prohibition exists in New York. And why? So that voters don't get harassed in line by poll activists.

Just like Georgia and New York, many States keep poll activists at length from voters. My Democrat colleagues conveniently ignore the fact that the 1965 Voting Rights Act prohibition of any voting practice or procedure that discriminates against minorities is still in effect. Even today, the Justice Department is suing two States under that law.

Protection of minority voting is already required by law. Protection of minority voting is a high and essential priority for me and for my Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

To be clear, I want an election system that allows every eligible citizen in every State to be able to exercise their right to vote in every single election.

So, putting aside the hysteria, let me explain why I don't support the Democrats' bill. First, their bill weakens voter ID. I, along with a great majority of voters of all races, favor voter photo ID. Their bill makes it easier to cheat by accommodating unmonitored vote collection boxes. Their bill opens the gates to a flood of lawsuits pre- and post-election, and it weakens the safeguards of voter registration.

There are other things in the Democrats' bill that I don't support. I am not in favor of Federal funding for campaigns. I also don't think States should be required to allow felons to vote.

Most fundamentally, I think by reserving election procedures to the States, the Founders made it more difficult for a would-be authoritarian to change the law for voting in just one place—here in Washington—to keep himself in office.

Let me add that I think the Democrats' bill is insufficiently focused on the real threat, and that is the corruption of the counting of the ballots, the certification of elections, and the congressional provisions for accepting and counting a slate of electors. This is where the apparent conspirators were focused in their attempt in the last election to subvert democracy and prevent the peaceful transfer of power.

Now, I respect Democrats who disagree with my point of view. I hope they will offer me the same respect. People who want voter ID are not racists. People who don't want Federal funding of campaigns aren't Bull Connor. People who insist that vote drop boxes be monitored aren't Jefferson Davis.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

H.R. 5746

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, just yesterday, we, the Nation, celebrated the moral vision and exceptional courage of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Born and raised under the violent oppression of Jim Crow segregation, Dr.